

**AGENDA ITEM III A**  
**PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAM**  
**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**M.A. IN ADULT EDUCATION**

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### **PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

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##### **M.A. IN ADULT EDUCATION**

##### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

For many years, Northwestern State University (NW) has offered an Adult Education concentration within its Master of Education program. Existing M.Ed. programs are now undergoing curricular redesign as part of statewide teacher education reform. A key criteria of redesigned M.Ed. programs will be the exclusion of any curricula which do not specifically lead to further skills in certified areas of elementary and secondary education. NW's Adult Education concentration would not be consistent, if it were not revised, with new M.Ed. program designs. NW requested the staff's advice on which steps needed to be taken to continue this program offering. After examining similar programs nationwide, the staff suggested that NW pursue a separate and distinct M.A. program in Adult Education. NW agreed this would be the most appropriate step to take.

Upon receipt of NW's proposal, the staff engaged the services of Dr. Ronald Cervero, Head, Department of Adult Education, School of Leadership and Lifelong Learning, College of Education, at the University of Georgia, to assess the proposed program. Below is a summary of his observations and recommendations, accompanied by relevant responses from NW.

##### **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEWER, WITH RESPONSES FROM NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

##### **PROGRAM DESIGN**

Report: Progression of courses...is well thought out...starting with the foundations and learning course is essential as they are the building blocks....It is also wise to require EDCI 5010 early.

Response: The consultant emphasizes the importance of the scope and sequence of courses comprising the curriculum as outlined in Northwestern's proposal. Students' plans of study will illustrate and student advising will emphasize the importance of the sequencing of courses as suggested by the consultant.

## **NEED**

Report: The programs at the University of New Orleans and LSU are highly specialized in small segments of the field of adult education (and, as such are unlikely to fulfill needs in north Louisiana.)

Response: The consultant affirms Northwestern's statement about the need for this program due both to social and economic trends. In addition, the first goal of Louisiana 2020 speaks directly to the need for professionals in the field of adult education. As the consultant indicates, this is a unique program. Northwestern would be privileged to provide the program within the state.

## **STUDENTS**

Report: The [University's] estimates are probably on the conservative side.

Response: The University plans to actively market the program and focus recruiting efforts on a national audience. As the enrollment demands increase the University intends to accommodate the growth.

## **MINORITY ISSUES**

Report: Sustained attention will need to be given to ways of attracting minority students. The single biggest factor here would be the presence of minority faculty members.

Response: At the current time, Northwestern has a significant minority enrollment in graduate-level programs. In 2002-03 Northwestern awarded 212 master's level degrees. Women received 92% percent, and 25% was earned by students classified as ethnic minority.

Northwestern consistently recruits students regardless of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, disability, or veteran status. The College of Education will continue "sustained" efforts to recruit minority students for this program. The statement about minority faculty is addressed in the next item.

## **FACULTY**

Report: It is essential that the program hire an assistant professor for 2005. Special emphasis should be placed on hiring a racial or ethnic minority for this position.

Response: Northwestern plans to conduct a national search to hire a qualified faculty member for 2005 with special attention to recruiting a minority.

## GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Report: This is a very well-conceived proposal for an MA in Adult Education, and I recommend that the new degree program be approved. It is very significant that the College of Education did not simply take the existing curriculum for the M.Ed. degree and re-label it as an M.A. degree. The courses that have been added are essential for professional preparation in adult education. The College has sequenced the courses into an effective curriculum. The current faculty members are well-prepared to deliver the program. My major recommendation is that efforts be made to hire a racial or ethnic minority faculty member in order to effectively prepare students in the program and to attract high quality minority students to the program.

Response: The College of Education was very deliberate and focused in developing and justifying the proposed program and appreciates the consultant's acknowledgment of those efforts. The Office of Enrollment Management employs a recruiter who focuses on graduate programs. This new program will be made a priority and recruitment efforts will address minority audiences and publications. A national search will be conducted to identify a qualified faculty member with emphasis on identifying and recruiting a minority.

## STAFF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

It is clear from the consultant's report and the University's response that this is a program whose time has come. The only caveat should be a requirement that the University hire an additional faculty member for AY 2005-2006 with special emphasis on minority recruitment.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

***The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant conditional approval for the proposed M.A. program in Adult Education (CIP Code 13.1201) at Northwestern State University to begin Fall 2004. By June 1, 2005, the University shall submit a report to the Commissioner of Higher Education which addresses the need for an additional Adult Education faculty member (with special emphasis on the recruitment of a minority individual) by the AY 2005-2006 academic year.***